

The Flight of The Pipistrel Sinus

Carlo Calanni

This flight was exhilarating because of the uniqueness of the Pipistrel.

It certainly made me forget the landing of our flight from Germany to Catania, Sicily. The approach to Runway 9 on the Airbus 320 looked quite normal. My wife Henny and I were chatting and I commented on the flying over the beach (east of the runway) populated with beach goers.



I looked over to my left and saw the threshold (100 feet?)...All of sudden the the pilot went “balls to the wall” and the pitching that ensued must have the shaker crying for attention. He is going around, not a word spoken (I can understand that), until the downwind leg. He simply said something to the effect that the wind was too strong...

Usually, one hears the gear being extended and locked afterward, but we were busy chatting and didn't pay attention. On the second approach, way at sea we finally heard the gears lowered (for what seemed to us to be the first time but perhaps not). This time around he must have come in a little fast and put the A/C solidly enough (to put it mildly) that only those beefed up gears could have sustained such a landing. He eventually was able to stop the A/C through heavy breaking and reverse thrust. That night my son in law called one of his friends at ATC and he simply said that on that day there had been some wind shears...



When I got off I noticed the wind sock blowing up and down the runway and the wind could not have been more than 15 to 20K. What took place is anybody's guess. We'll never know but I can tell you that my adrenaline was pumping. We are pilots, we will not criticize a fellow pilot. We all have had “moments” buried in our many uneventful flights...What ensued after was one of the greatest vacations we ever had.

Back to the Pipistrel Sinus. I know you want to hear about this. This Aircraft is a 2010 model loaded with everything. As a motor glider it has a ratio of 1:30. Wing span is 15 meters (49') it has flaperon, a 3-bladed variable pitch prop, Rotax engine that burns 2&1/2 liters of mogas, side by side seating, digital flight display (standard) and a Garmin package. The encased cockpit is made of kevlar & lexan. Dual control and a parachute should one run out of options during an emergency landing in mountainous terrain (it should save the day for both pilots and aircraft).



We took off from a dirt strip in Fiumefreddo, a town near the famous resort of Taormina where some of the photos I sent were taken. I will add a couple more. My son in law generously offered me the left seat and while he played the flight instructor role I got to do some flying. I think in a couple of hours I could have mastered the airplane but this was the only flight we had time for. The incredible thing about the airplane is the safety fea-





tures and the versatility of being a glider at the same time.

That means that once you are in thermals you can spend many hours in total silence and spend no money for gas...The ratio is impressive. As I told you in my last email we never started the engine again once we shut it down, all the way to landing.

The spoilers are an important thing on the novice. You need those to bring the aircraft down and hold it down once you land since this baby will take off again on her own if you are not prepared...Incredibly my wife went up, after much convincing, and when

she came back she was beaming and happy of her decision. She is now a convert. She normally prefers to fly a Boeing 777, thank you! The photo you see attached were taken over the town of Taormina and Castel Mola a favorite international tourist destination. By the way, I spent the early part of my life in this area.

Later,
Carlo

P.S. Attached are some additional pictures. Also, a video from you Tube at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkWOkOP1F7M&feature=related>

